

§ 16.105

§ 16.105 Eligibility of applicants.

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses under the Act, the applicant must be a party, as that term is defined in 5 U.S.C. 551(3), to an adversary adjudication for which it seeks an award; the applicant must prevail; and must meet all the conditions of eligibility set out in this subpart and subpart B.

(b) To be eligible for an award, the applicant must be:

(1) An individual with a net worth of not more than \$1 million;

(2) The sole owner of an unincorporated business which has a net worth of not more than \$5 million, including both personal and business interests, and not more than 500 employees;

(3) A charitable or other tax exempt organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) with not more than 500 employees;

(4) A cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)) with not more than 500 employees;

(5) Any other partnership, corporation, association or public or private organization with a net worth of not more than \$5 million and not more than 500 employees. A unit of state or local government is not a public organization within the meaning of this provision.

(c) For purposes of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date the proceeding was initiated.

(d) An applicant who owns an unincorporated business will be considered as an *individual* rather than a *sole owner of an unincorporated business* if the issues on which the applicant prevails are related primarily to personal interests rather than to business interests.

(e) The employees of an applicant include all persons who perform services for remuneration for the applicant, under the applicant's direction and control. Part-time employees shall be included.

(f) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. Any individual, corporation or other entity that directly

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or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares of another business, or controls, *in any manner*, the election of a majority of that business' board of directors, trustees or other persons exercising similar functions, shall be considered an affiliate for purposes of this part, unless the adjudicative officer determines that such treatment would be unjust and contrary to the purposes of the Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities. In addition, the adjudicative officer may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(g) An applicant that participates in a proceeding primarily on behalf of one or more other persons or entities that would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

[46 FR 63021, Dec. 29, 1981, as amended at 72 FR 37098, July 9, 2007]

§ 16.106 Standards for awards.

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award for fees and expenses incurred in connection with a proceeding, or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, unless the position of the Department as a party over which the applicant has prevailed was substantially justified or if special circumstances make the award sought unjust. No presumption arises that the Department's position was not substantially justified simply because the Department did not prevail.

(b) An award will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the proceeding.

§ 16.107 Allowable fees and expenses.

(a) The following fees and other expenses are allowable under the Act:

(1) Reasonable expenses of expert witnesses;

(2) Reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, or project necessary for the preparation of the party's case;

(3) Reasonable attorney or agent fees;

(b) Awards will be based on the prevailing market rates for the kind and